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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/840,426	04/20/2001	Ming King Wong	02369	4187
7590 08/11/2006				
SALTER & MICHAELSON 321 SOUTH MAIN STREET PROVIDENCE, RI 02903			EXAMINER PRICE, CARL D	
			ART UNIT 3749	PAPER NUMBER

DATE MAILED: 08/11/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/840,426

Applicant(s)

WONG, MING KING

Examiner

CARL D. PRICE

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: ____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 1-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Regarding claims 1-20, the word "means" is preceded by the word(s) " interchangeable" in an attempt to use a "means" clause to recite a claim element as a means for performing a specified function. However, since no function is specified by the word(s) preceding "means," it is impossible to determine the equivalents of the element, as required by 35 U.S.C. 112, sixth paragraph. See *Ex parte Klumb*, 159 USPQ 694 (Bd. App. 1967).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims **1-3** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over **US003309902 (Kanamaru)** in view of **US005308240 (Lowenthal)**.

US003309902 (Kanamaru) shows an interchangeable lighter which "*is envisioned for use in virtually any type of gas fueled cigarette lighter no effort will be made to describe such conventional construction*" (see column 2, lines 7-16), comprising:

- a casing (11) receiving a liquefied gas storage;

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- a gas valve (10, 16, 18) operatively extended from the liquefied gas storage for controlling a flow of gas;
- an ignition button mounted to the casing in a movable manner (not shown; “the inside top portion 22 of cylindrical member 20 is also conical in configuration and complementary with respect to top 18 of burner nozzle 10, such that when cylindrical member 20 is moved downwardly by *any conventional mechanism, such as lever 24 for example*, surfaces 18 and 22 abut precisely”), wherein the ignition button is arranged to compress the piezoelectric unit when the ignition button is depressed; and
- a flame interchanging means for selectively interchanging a flame of the piezoelectric lighter:
 - o comprising a valve switcher (20) movably received in, wherein the valve switcher comprises at least two gas nozzles (26, 30, 32, 34, 42) selectively and coaxially aligning with the gas valve for the flow of gas passing therethrough so as to produce different flames; and

wherein the flame interchangeable means further comprises a gas adapter (10, 36, 38) fitted in the lighter wherein the valve switcher (20) is supported on the gas adapter and a gas emitter (16, 18, 22) having an inlet end operatively extended from the gas valve and a gas releasing end (12) penetrated through the gas adapter so as to selectively align with one of the gas nozzles.

US003309902 (Kanamaru) shows and discloses invention substantially as set forth in the claims with possible exception to:

- an ignition button;
- a switcher cavity; and
- a piezoelectric unit fitted in the casing for generating piezoelectricity;

US005308240 (Lowenthal) teaches, from applicant’s same gas lighter field of endeavor, operating a gas lighter valve(s) located in a switcher cavity (figure 6) with an ignition button

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(24B) connected both to a piezoelectric unit (25B) fitted in the casing for generating electricity, and attached to a gas valve control lever (27B).

In regard to claims 1-3, for the purpose of providing suitable means to generate and electric current to ignite the fuel gas and for the purpose of operating the valve control lever, it would have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art to modify **US003309902 (Kanamaru)** to include conventional operating elements such as locating the valve and nozzle in a cavity and an ignition button connected both to a piezoelectric unit (25B) fitted in the casing for generating electricity, and attached to a gas valve control lever (27B), in view of the teaching of **US005308240 (Lowenthal)**. In regard to claim 3, any one of the three nozzles (26, 34, 42) of **US003309902 (Kanamaru)** located on the outer surface, understood as the obvious structural and functional equivalent to applicant's broadly claimed "ceiling", are each capable of being windproof or resistant to wind at least to some degree, depending on the amount of wind. Applicant having provided no structure that would otherwise distinguish the claimed invention over the prior art of record.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims **4-20** are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

USPTO CUSTOMER CONTACT INFORMATION

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to CARL D. PRICE whose telephone number is (571) 272-4880. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday between 6:30am-3:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Ehud Gartenberg can be reached on (571) 272-4828. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.


CARL D. PRICE

Primary Examiner

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